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09/941,680	08/30/2001	Koubun Suzuki	212557US-2	9223

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EXAMINER

BRUCKART, BENJAMIN R

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2155

DATE MAILED: 08/08/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

# Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/941,680

Applicant(s)

SUZUKI ET AL.

Examiner

Benjamin R. Bruckart

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

## Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 May 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-41, 43-100 and 102-109 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-41, 43-100 and 102-109 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- 1) ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - 2) ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 3) ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

## Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

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**Detailed Action**

Claims 1-41, 43-100, 102-109 are pending in this Office Action.

Claims 43 and 101 are cancelled.

Claims 1-3, 6, 9-13, 16, 21-37, 40-41, 43-46, 49-10 and 102-109 are amended.

***Foreign Priority***

Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted on 8/30/01 under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file. Attention is directed to the fact that the date for which foreign priority is claimed is not the date of the filed application acknowledged in the oath or declaration. The priority date of 8/30/00 is given priority.

***Specification***

The change to the specification is accepted.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter, which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1, 11, and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 1 recites the limitation "an initiating apparatus." The examiner cannot determine from the claims what the apparatus is initiating. Is it initiating a transmission or joining the group or groups of apparatuses.

Claim 1 also recites the limitation "related information." This is a broad term and fails to limit or distinctly identify what the information is, how it relates, and to what it relates to.

Claim 2 recites "terminal units." This term is new and the examiner is confused about the change in terminology when apparatuses are mentioned and defined above.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

**Claims 1-41, 43-100, 102-109 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable by U.S. Patent No 6,343,320 by Fairchild et al in view of U.S. Patent No 6,310,692 by Fan et al.**

Regarding claim 1, a remote control system configured to control a plurality of apparatuses divided into a predetermined number of groups including at least an image forming apparatus (Fairchild: col. 11, lines 3-30; col. 6, lines 62-67), comprising:

a central control system comprising at least a computer unit configured to receive information from said plurality of apparatuses and remotely control said plurality of apparatuses based on said information (Fairchild: col. 6, lines 11-40); and

an information collection unit configured to collect related information from all of said plurality of apparatuses included in all the groups except a group corresponding to an initiating

apparatus when apparatus information is received by said central control system from said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled (Fairchild: col. 10, lines 56- col. 11, line 2; col. 6, lines 25-45; col. 15, lines 35-48).

The Fairchild reference teaches an apparatus for forming content to be browsed but does not explicitly state an image forming apparatus.

The Fan reference teaches a remote control system for controlling image forming apparatuses (Fan: col. 3, lines 64-col. 4, lines 34)

The Fan reference further teaches the reference allows remote monitoring and control of devices to alert personnel of preventive maintenance needs to reduce down-time and improve efficiency of repair (Fan: col. 3, lines 1-26).

Therefore it would have been obvious at the time of the invention to one of ordinary skill in the art to create the system of remote control system as taught by Fairchild while employing image forming apparatus as taught by Fan in order to use preventive maintenance to reduce down-time and improve efficiency of repair (Fan: col. 3, lines 1-26).

Claims 2-10 are rejected under the same rationale given above. In the rejections set forth, the examiner will address the additional limitations and point to the relevant teachings of Fairchild et al and Fan et al.

Regarding claim 2, the remote control system according to claim 1, further comprising:

an information processing unit configured to process said related information which is acquired from said plurality of apparatuses and is collected by said information collection unit (Fairchild: col. 6, lines 25-45; Fan: 4, lines 49- col. 5, line 26); and

an information transmission unit configured to connect to terminal units provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses and subsequently transmitting said information processed by said information processing unit (Fairchild: col. 6, lines 46- col. 7, line 4; Fan: 4, lines 49- col. 5, line 26).

Regarding claim 3, the remote control system according to claim 1, further comprising:

an information setting unit configured to set said apparatus information in advance of collecting said related information, for which said collection by said information collection unit is allowed (Fairchild: col. 6, lines 11-40).

Regarding claim 4, the remote control system according to claim 1, wherein said information collected, from all of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled, by said information collection unit is related to pre-maintenance (Fairchild: col. 6, lines 38-45; col. 7, lines 41-63; Fan: col. 6, lines 9-35).

Regarding claim 5, the remote control system according to claim 1, wherein said information collected, from all of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled, by said information collection unit is related to expendable supplies and material (Fan: col. 5, lines 26-59; col. 1, lines 14-44).

Regarding claim 6, the remote control system according to claim 1, further comprising:

a group setting unit configured to set a group in advance of collecting said related information by dividing said plurality of image forming apparatuses into said predetermined number of groups (Fairchild: col. 11, lines 3-55).

Regarding claim 7, the remote control system according to claim 2, further comprising: an information alteration and addition unit configured to perform alteration and addition onto said information processed by said information processing unit (Fairchild: col. 9, lines 36-48).

Regarding claim 8, the remote control system according to claim 2, further comprising: an information destination setting unit configured to set a destination of information transmission performed by said information transmission unit (Fairchild: col. 11, lines 56- col. 12, line 3).

Regarding claim 9, the remote control system according to claim 2, further comprising: an information outputting unit configured to output said information processed by said information

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processing unit through at least one of an image formation on a display device, data recording on a paper sheet, or an audible voice (Fairchild: col. 5, lines 1-26; col. 6, lines 38- col. 7, line 4).

Regarding claim 10, the remote control system according to claim 2, further comprising: an information transmitting unit configured to transmit said information processed by said information processing unit when a request for acquiring said processed information is received from any terminal unit of the terminal units (Fairchild: col. 14, lines 66- col. 15, lines 34).

Regarding claim 11, a remote control system configured to control a plurality of apparatuses divided into a predetermined number of groups including at least an image forming apparatus (Fairchild: col. 11, lines 3-30; col. 6, lines 62-67), comprising:

- a central control system comprising at least a computer unit configured to receive information from said plurality of apparatuses and remotely control said plurality of apparatuses based on said information (Fairchild: col. 6, lines 11-40);

- an information accumulation unit configured to accumulate apparatus information when said apparatus information is received by said central control system from an initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled (Fairchild: col. 6, lines 11-40); and

- an information retrieval unit configured to retrieve related information from all of said plurality of apparatuses included in all the groups except a group corresponding to said initiating apparatus when said apparatus information is received by said central control system from said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses (Fairchild: col. 10, lines 56- col. 11, line 2; col. 6, lines 25-45; col. 15, lines 35-48).

The Fairchild reference teaches an apparatus for forming content to be browsed but does not explicitly state an image forming apparatus.

The Fan reference teaches a remote control system for controlling image forming apparatuses (Fan: col. 3, lines 64-col. 4, lines 34)

The Fan reference further teaches the reference allows remote monitoring and control of devices to alert personnel of preventive maintenance needs to reduce down-time and improve efficiency of repair (Fan: col. 3, lines 1-26).

Therefore it would have been obvious at the time of the invention to one of ordinary skill in the art to create the system of remote control system as taught by Fairchild while employing image forming apparatus as taught by Fan in order to use preventive maintenance to reduce down-time and improve efficiency of repair (Fan: col. 3, lines 1-26).

Claims 12-24 are rejected under the same rationale given above. In the rejections set fourth, the examiner will address the additional limitations and point to the relevant teachings of Fairchild et al and Fan et al.

Regarding claim 12, the remote control system according to claim 11, further comprising:

an information processing unit configured to process said related information which is acquired from said plurality of apparatuses and is retrieved by said information retrieval unit (Fairchild: col. 6, lines 25-45; Fan: 4, lines 49- col. 5, line 26); and

an information transmission unit configured to connect to terminal units provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses, and subsequently transmitting said information processed by said information processing unit (Fairchild: col. 6, lines 46- col. 7, line 4).

Regarding claim 13, the remote control system according to claim 11, further comprising: an information setting unit configured to set said apparatus information in advance of retrieving said related information, for which said retrieval by said information retrieval unit is allowed (Fairchild: col. 6, lines 11-40).

Regarding claim 14, the remote control system according to claim 11, wherein said information which is acquired from said plurality of apparatuses and being retrieved by said information retrieval unit is related to pre-maintenance (Fairchild: col. 6, lines 38-45; col. 7, lines 41-63; Fan: col. 6, lines 9-35).

Regarding claim 15, the remote control system according to claim 11, wherein said information accumulated, from all of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled, by said



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information accumulation unit is related to expendable supplies and material (Fan: col. 5, lines 26-59; col. 1, lines 14-44).

Regarding claim 16, the remote control system according to claim 11, further comprising: a group setting unit configured to set a group in advance of retrieving said related information by dividing said plurality of image forming apparatuses into said predetermined number of groups (Fairchild: col. 11, lines 3-55).

Regarding claim 17, the remote control system according to claim 16, further comprising: a plurality of communication adapters connected to said plurality of image forming apparatuses for communicating with said central control system, wherein said group setting unit divides said plurality of image forming apparatuses into a number of groups each assigned to said communication adapters (Fairchild: col. 11, lines 3-30).

Regarding claim 18, the remote control system according to claim 16, further comprising: a plurality of communication adapters connected to said plurality of image forming apparatuses for communicating with said central control system, wherein said group setting unit divides said plurality of image forming apparatuses into a number of groups each assigned to a predetermined number of said respective communication adapters (Fairchild: col. 11, lines 3-30).

Regarding claim 19, the remote control system according to claim 16, wherein said plurality of image forming apparatuses are interconnected by way of communication networks incorporating a network control unit, and wherein said group setting unit divides said plurality of image forming apparatuses into a number of groups each assigned to an IP address in said network system (Fairchild: col. 11, lines 3-30).

Regarding claim 20, the remote control system according to claim 16, wherein said plurality of image forming apparatuses are interconnected by way of communication networks incorporating a network control unit, and wherein said group setting unit divides said plurality of image

forming apparatuses into a number of groups each assigned to a predetermined number of IP addresses in said network system (Fairchild: col. 11, lines 3-30).

Regarding claim 21, the remote control system according to claim 12, further comprising: an information alteration and addition unit configured to perform alteration and addition onto said information processed by said information processing unit (Fairchild: col. 9, lines 36-48).

Regarding claim 22, the remote control system according to claim 12, further comprising: an information destination unit configured to set a destination of information transmission performed by said information transmission unit (Fairchild: col. 11, lines 56- col. 12, line 3).

Regarding claim 23, the remote control system according to claim 12, further comprising: an information outputting unit configured to output said information processed by said information processing unit through at least one of an image formation on a display device, data recording on a paper sheet, or an audible voice (Fairchild: col. 5, lines 1-26; col. 6, lines 38- col. 7, line 4).

Regarding claim 24, the remote control system according to claim 12, further comprising: an information transmitting unit configured to transmit said information processed by said information processing unit when a request for acquiring said processed information is received from any terminal unit of the terminal units (Fairchild: col. 14, lines 66- col. 15, lines 34).

Regarding claim 25, a remote control system configured to control a plurality of apparatuses divided into a predetermined number of groups including at least an image forming apparatus (Fairchild: col. 11, lines 3-30; col. 6, lines 62-67), comprising:

- a central control system comprising at least a computer unit configured to receive information from said plurality of apparatuses and remotely control said plurality of apparatuses based on said information (Fairchild: col. 6, lines 11-40, lines 62-67);

- an information collection unit configured to collect related information from all of said plurality of apparatuses except said group corresponding to said initiating apparatus when

apparatus information is received by said central control system from said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled (Fairchild: col. 10, lines 56- col. 11, line 2; col. 6, lines 25-45; col. 15, lines 35-48);

a first information processing unit configured to process said apparatus information (Fairchild: col. 6, lines 11-40);

a first information transmission unit configured to connect to terminal units provided by a plurality of service centers so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses, and subsequently transmitting said apparatus information processed by said first information processing unit (Fairchild: col. 6, lines 25-45);

an information accumulation unit configured to accumulate said apparatus information when said apparatus information is received from said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses to be remotely controlled (Fairchild: col. 6, lines 11-40);

an information retrieval unit configured to retrieve said related information from all of said plurality of apparatuses except said group corresponding to said initiating apparatus when said apparatus information is received by said central control system from said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses (Fairchild: col. 10, lines 56- col. 11, line 2; col. 6, lines 25-45; col. 15, lines 35-48);

a second information processing unit configured to process said apparatus information received from said initiating apparatus of said plurality of apparatuses and retrieved by said information retrieval unit (Fairchild: col. 6, lines 11-40);

a second information transmission unit configured to connect to the terminal units so as to control said plurality of image forming apparatuses, and subsequently transmitting said apparatus information processed by said second information processing unit (Fairchild: col. 6, lines 25-45); and

an information decision unit configured to determine whether or not an execution command is sent to any one of said information collection unit, said first information processing unit, said first information transmission unit, said information retrieval unit, said second information processing unit, and said second information transmission unit (Fairchild: col. 5, lines 52- col. 6, line 37).

The Fairchild reference teaches an apparatus for forming content to be browsed but does not explicitly state an image forming apparatus.

The Fan reference teaches a remote control system for controlling image forming apparatuses (Fan: col. 3, lines 64-col. 4, lines 34)

The Fan reference further teaches the reference allows remote monitoring and control of devices to alert personnel of preventive maintenance needs to reduce down-time and improve efficiency of repair (Fan: col. 3, lines 1-26).

Therefore it would have been obvious at the time of the invention to one of ordinary skill in the art to create the system of remote control system as taught by Fairchild while employing image forming apparatus as taught by Fan in order to use preventive maintenance to reduce down-time and improve efficiency of repair (Fan: col. 3, lines 1-26).

In the computer network art a the differences between a system, method, a computer accessible recording medium tangibly embodying a program of instructions, and means functions for remote and central control; are equated to the software, hardware, and actions in which the invention runs. Because the claims are substantially similar in content across claim trees, the examiner has grouped the claims across as illustrated below and rejected all the limitations.

**Claims 1-41, 43-100, 102-109 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable by U.S. Patent No 6,343,320 by Fairchild et al in view of U.S. Patent No 6,310,692 by Fan et al.**

***Prior Art***

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure:

U. S. Patent No. 5,935,217 by Sakai et al teaches grouped and controlled output based devices.

**REMARKS**

The claim language while distinguished from the previous prior art is still very broad because many terms are not defined within the claims. Many 112 issues remain even and the breadth of the language leaves art to read openly on the claims.

***Conclusion***

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event,

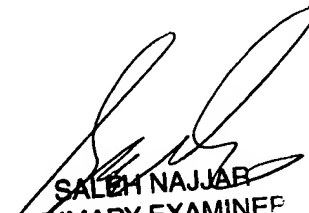
however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Benjamin R. Bruckart whose telephone number is (571) 272-3982. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00-5:30PM with every other Friday off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Saleh Najjar can be reached on (571) 272-4006. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Benjamin R Bruckart  
Examiner  
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SALEH NAJJAR  
PRIMARY EXAMINER